

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:17 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2201. An act to authorize the establishment of a national database for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to America's veterans.

H.R. 3505. An act to amend the Bend Pine Nursery Land Conveyance Act to specify the recipients and consideration for conveyance of the Bend Pine Nursery, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3768. An act to expand the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Florida.

H.R. 4193. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for the expansion of areas designated as renewal communities based on 2000 census data and to treat certain census tracts with low populations as low-income communities for purposes of the new markets tax credit.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 403. Concurrent resolution condemning the Government of the Republic of the Sudan for its attacks against innocent civilians in the impoverished Darfur region of western Sudan.

H. Con. Res. 420. Concurrent resolution applauding the men and women who keep America moving and recognizing National Transportation Week.

H. Con. Res. 423. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for activities associated with the dedication of the National World War II Memorial.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2201. An act to authorize the establishment of a national database for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to America's veterans; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3768. An act to expand the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Florida; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4193. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for the expansion of areas designated as renewal commu-

nities based on 2000 census data and to treat certain census tracts with low populations as low-income communities for purposes of the new markets tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

The following concurrent resolutions were read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 403. Concurrent resolution condemning the Government of the Republic of the Sudan for its attacks against innocent civilians in the impoverished Darfur region of western Sudan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H. Con. Res. 420. Concurrent resolution applauding the men and women who keep America moving and recognizing National Transportation Week; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 4275. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the 10-percent individual income tax rate bracket.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 3505. An act to amend the Bend Pine Nursery Land Conveyance Act to specify the recipients and consideration for conveyance of the Bend Pine Nursery, and for other purposes.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

POM-444. A resolution adopted by the Cleburne Independent School District of the State of Texas relative to the social security system; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-445. A resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Cook of the State of Illinois relative to discrimination against women; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM-446. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Maine relative to the United States Postal Service; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Whereas, the United States Postal Service, founded in 1775, provides a means for commerce and communications and provides postal services to all communities, rich and poor, urban and rural, with uniform postage rates and it has for nearly 230 years provided dependable, affordable mail service. The United States Postal Service remains an important part of our nation's economic infrastructure through which nearly \$1 trillion of economic activity is conducted each year and in which 9,000,000 people are employed; and

Whereas, Americans currently enjoy the most extensive postal service at the lowest postage rates of any major industrialized nation in the world, and excessive below-cost postage discounts to large business and advertising mailers unnecessarily drain billions of dollars of revenue from the United States Postal Service and ultimately cause small businesses and ordinary citizens to subsidize those discounts through higher postage rates. Millions of older, disabled and economically disadvantaged Americans do not have easy access to the Internet or to electronic banking and bill paying and therefore are heavily dependent on the United States Postal Service for communication and the conducting of business transactions; and

Whereas, the President created the President's commission on the United States Postal Service, which has recommended far-reaching changes to postal operations and services, including severing postal employees from federal employee health, retirement and workers' compensation programs, and the repeal of certain existing laws, which would pave the way towards reducing rank-and-file wages and benefits while eliminating the current salary cap on executive-level postal positions in order to raise postal executive pay on par with that of corporate CEOs and the commission has recommended a new President-appointed, corporate-style board of directors and the new Postal Regulatory Board that would give these new politically appointed governing bodies broad authority to set rates without prior approval, review and refine the scope of the United States Postal Service's universal service obligation and uniform rate structure and change and restrict the scope of services currently protected under postal monopoly regulations; and

Whereas, this broad authority would allow post offices to be closed without community input and prices to be set with a complicated postage rate structure or would even turn over postal operations to private for-profit enterprises despite a recent survey whose respondents had an overwhelmingly favorable view of the United States Postal Service, with 3 out of 4 saying no major changes are needed and 3 out of 10 saying the United States Postal Service works extremely well as is; and

Whereas, replacing the United States Postal Service's public service obligation with a profit-seeking mandate would undermine the United States Postal Service's historical "universal service" obligation, weaken its national infrastructure and divide our nation politically and economically, and here in the District of Maine, the United States Postal Service has unilaterally implemented a cost-saving reduction of hours and access that restricts customer service by curtailing hours; and

Whereas, this program has reduced hours of service at over 50% of post offices in Maine, severely affecting customer service, without regard to customers' input and complaints. Maine is a rural state and our elderly and disabled citizens depend on postal services: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That We, your Memorialists, request that the President of the United States, Congress and the United States Postal Service continue to maintain affordable, dependable mail service at current levels because of its social and economic importance to our nation; and be it further

Resolved, That we oppose any effort to undermine the United States Postal Service's universal service obligation and its uniform rate structure, that the service hours be returned to where they were before the report of the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service and prior to the implementation of the Small Post Office Reviews and Standardization Program and that any recommendation from the presidential commission that curtails public services related to our current postal service be rejected; and be it further

Resolved, That We, your Memorialists, go on record against any changes that would harm the workers of the United States Postal Service, including legislation to close small offices, take away or modify the collective bargaining system of postal workers or change the current bargaining system for employees benefits; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United